

Feb 28, 2020

UPDATE from Heath Board of Health

Coronavirus COVID-19

The Heath Board of Health is a member along with the other 24 towns in Franklin County (and two in Hampshire County) of the Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition (MAPHCO) which is a federally-funded program to provide free services and expertise to our towns for managing and preparing for emergencies. Through our membership in MAPHCO, and with support from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and our membership in the Cooperative Public Health Service (CPHS), a part of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), the **Heath Board of Health has access to the latest information and services for supporting our town in dealing with the possibility of a COVID-19 epidemic in our area.**

We, members of the Board of Health, are committed to **providing the latest updates** on the disease, recommendations for protection against infection, and availability of health care and other support should our Town need it.

In this rapidly evolving situation, an important part of our job is to keep you informed of the risks and the most effective precautions you can take. You can also get updates, and more information on the virus itself, on these websites:

[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

[mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19)

2. Understand the risk.

As of today, February 28, 2020, the risk of infection in our area is low. "The risk of COVID-19 remains low in Massachusetts," Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel said. "Our healthcare workers, institutions and public health partners across the Commonwealth are constantly training for the possible emergency of diseases. Massachusetts is prepared for this potential outbreak."

Bharel stressed several times that Massachusetts has had only one confirmed case of COVID-19, the illness caused by coronavirus, [when a man returning from Wuhan, China, tested positive in early February](#). She said the patient is doing well and recovering in self-quarantine at his home.

But we can't count on its staying low. It is possible that we'll see cases of COVID-19 in our community.

3. Things you can do to prepare. There are basic precautions that everyone can easily take to prevent the spread of infectious diseases such as COVID-19 — or flu.

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home if you are sick.

To learn more about ways you can help yourself, visit
[cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/personal/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/personal/index.html)

If you have questions, please contact Heath Board of Health members:

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